

BL
2775.2
B4

ON RELIGIOUS MATURITY

by

M. Belanger



PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY

New York

© Copyright, 1962,
by M. Belanger

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 61-15238

Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

1	Basic Elements of Mature Religion	1
2	The Projected Gods	13
3	The Deification of Persons	24
4	The Problem of Human Suffering	33
5	Communication	43
6	Anent Certain Fictions Commonly Accepted as Dogmas	53
7	Worship, Meditation, Prayer	66
8	Who Is an Adult?	76

ON RELIGIOUS MATURITY

Chapter 1

BASIC ELEMENTS OF MATURE RELIGION

From the man who at puberty said, "To hell with religion!" and proceeded to ignore its various organized aspects ever since to the man who at fifty is hopelessly and delightedly entangled in the meshes of a highly organized religion, these and all the various types of response to life in between, all are involved in religion.

What religion means to each is, of course, different but "to hell with religion" may conceivably culminate in a higher type of religious development than the opposite attitude.

A woman was defining her religion when she said, "People should be nice to each other." Equally when she sent her son to a military school "because they have such nice manners." Manners to her were the summum bonum of life.

To a very large segment of humanity in the United States religion means respectability or middle class morality. Finaglers in politics and business are well

aware of this and deliberately turn their interest to the churches so that the mantle of respectability will cover them.

Many ex-Communists who make a profession of their ex-Communism take their cue from the above types and usually join some popular and highly orthodox church. The more authoritarian the church, the more they will feel at home because they, very likely, have not changed their basic emotional response to life but have simply substituted a new vocabulary to describe the same things.

The basic elements of religion, however, are not respectability, middle class morality, manners. Nor are they church membership or sanitation. They do not involve, necessarily, a belief in the currently fashionable gods.

What then is basic?

The basic elements of religion have to do with one's total response to the universe as he experiences it.

If one is fortunate enough to have a "lover's quarrel" with the universe, his will be a high religion. A "fightin' and lovin'" attitude will improve the character of his gods. It will deepen his manners to such an extent that he will rarely be referred to as polite and almost never as respectable.

People whose code is middle class morality will warn their daughters against him and, if it were still the custom to force such as he to drink the hemlock, they would be the first to recommend it.

Loyal church members would either feel sorry for him because he, in their opinion, is lost or they would choose to ignore him. The orthodox would be offended by him and others would probably view him as one who needed delousing and deodorizing.

So far does the popular religion of any generation drift from the basic elements of religion—one's total response to the universe as he experiences it.

Is this so strange?

The prophets, that is, the basically religious, of any generation are always suspect characters, too radical for the rank and file to stomach. This is so because the prophets get beyond the formalities of popular religion. "The bleating of lambs and the lowing of cattle" is a cacophony to their ears.

To the tidy, John the Baptist was an unkempt screwball, given to strange dietary fads.

Jesus described the respectable of his day as those who "cleaned the outside of the cup" and neglected their spiritual innards. To the respectable he was a "wine-bibber and a drunkard."

Respectability, manners, sanitary notions, middle class morality, orthodox gods are so much barnacle that has attached itself to the ship. Only the very foolish or the very blind or the vicious would ever hope to convince others that the barnacles are the ship.

This has always been so and it is likely to continue to be so and nothing written here will much change it.

The man who looks only to things that are basic and

wants to communicate with the minds of other men on this level must expect a very small audience. Thinking takes too much time and too much effort for busy people ever to care very much about it.

The man who at puberty said "to hell with religion" may really have taken a step toward rather than from reality. In his childhood honesty he may have sensed a fraud and wanted no part of it. His was then an attitude of reaching for the real. There is some hope for such an one because contrary to popular opinion the basic religious attitude is skepticism which in its way announces very loudly that the holder of such an attitude believes in a better world than that which he has seen or of which he has been told.

One could add to skepticism other qualities that characterize the maturely religious man. For example, he must have a sense of humor. Any man who cannot laugh at himself, at his own ideas, at his own gods, cannot much be trusted with the truth about anything.

A third characteristic of the maturely religious is independence. He is unafraid to stand alone. Only such a man really accepts himself and his universe for better or worse. He may be married to life without benefit of clergy but his was not a shotgun wedding, as is the case with so many of the orthodox. He belongs only to the fellowship of the unherded.

The maturely religious arrives eventually at a high level of intellectual integrity. He will not call the cater-

wauling of popular evangelists good because he sees the basic dishonesty of herd thinking. Certainly he will not credit any popular hero with virtues of which the hero himself has not the remotest concept.

While he will see that there are such things as truth and falsehood, good and bad, he will also see how inextricably they are bound up together and how easy it is to confuse them, from which error only his sense of humor, his skepticism, his independence can enable him to escape and to filter out that which is most valuable. Even then he realizes that he can be wrong.

The maturely religious man has a sense of justice that gets beyond sentimentalism and the garden varieties of sympathy which are so often evasions of rather than a genuine love of fair play.

Like the hero in the Bhagavad Gita he sees that life is a battle that is never over and never finally won but it is a battle that is worth his while and it can be fought in love.

It is his love of justice that makes the maturely religious man a real lover of humanity. It enables him to be in the battle and above the battle. His energies are not dissipated by mawkish sentiments and even his enemies are made cleaner by attacks from him.

Patience and mercy are his shields and he concerns himself not in the least with rewards to be received here or hereafter, though he knows good and well that virtue (that is: strength) is its own reward.

The emotional life of man is so often a confusing wilderness that one feels the need of a map. This is why men believe. Their belief often takes the form of a myth.

It is precisely because man must make an emotional adjustment to his universe that he so readily uses myths.

The maturely religious man sees in the use of myths much of good and evil. Therefore he always retains a skeptical attitude. He wishes to utilize the good and minimize the evil. The qualities of myths improve with the increase of skepticism and worsen with the increase of "faith." I have put faith in quotes because I mean here gullibility such as increases in wartime and is popularly called an increase in faith.

A myth is a story told to satisfy emotions. Any relationship it has to objective truth is usually considered to be of secondary importance.

When Hiawatha pointed to the moon and asked Nokomis about it, she answered, "Once a warrior, very angry, took his grandmother and threw her—'tis her figure that you see there." Such an answer satisfies the emotions of a child.

Politeness, manners, courtesy, such as are commonly demanded in the institutional and corporate life of our

times, require a "proper degree of disrespect for persons" in order to be achieved.

Polite conversation is really the absence of conversation. The participants do not like and/or trust one another enough to want to reveal themselves and they certainly do not care enough to want the other to reveal himself. Thus conversation becomes a kind of verbal hiding of thoughts and feelings.

To anyone who has the "proper degree of disrespect for persons" such politeness is an easy accomplishment.

For anyone who really likes people, it is so much dust and ashes in the mouth.

It should be obvious enough that anyone who is excessively polite really dislikes people.

Really to know people one has to get beyond politeness, far beyond.

Politeness is to a large extent a handy way of getting rid of people.

Politeness is a game and you are considered something of a boor if you do not play according to the rules.

Manners are for the most part an expression of vanity, an urge to be noticeably pleasing to others. They are one expression of herd thought. It is not that herd thinking is useless or can be safely ignored. One must sometimes make concession to common opinions. It is only that common opinion is the lowest common denominator rather than the final arbiter on matters of human decency or right or conduct.

How much of male slavery to women today is symbolized by shoving a chair under the fannies of able-bodied women! This is not so much an act of respect as an act expected.

Any real manners that exist anywhere spring from a genuine enjoyment of people. One recognizes these in the eyes and in the voices of people, more than in the words.

4

Man must make emotional adjustment—this is his religious need. In doing this he can use his intuition as a guide and deductive reasoning as a check. Granted that intuitive thought digs deeper, it needs to be challenged by logic.

Man's imagination creates "solid" realities, that is, myths, which must be interpreted by skepticism, humor.

Some of the great religions recognize the value of doubt. "Where there is enough faith, there is enough doubt which is a great spirit of inquiry, and where there is a great spirit of inquiry there is an illumination," says Zen Buddhism.

The illumination of Zen is called satori. "When you have satori you are able to reveal a palatial mansion made of precious stones on a single blade of grass; but when you have no satori, a palatial mansion itself is concealed behind a single blade of grass."

“To darkness are they doomed who worship only the body, and to greater darkness they who worship only the spirit.

“They who worship both body and spirit, by the body overcome death, and by the spirit achieve immortality,” from the Upanishads.

By the above I would mean that man is like a kernel of corn which is alive and healthy if, when planted in earth and stimulated by warmth and moisture, it sends out two shoots, one that makes the rootage, and the other the stalk; one draws sustenance from the earth, the other from the air and sun. When both shoots are present and functioning the corn reaches fulfillment and immortality through the ears of corn.

So it is with man. His roots are in the earth and humanity but he also draws sustenance from ideas, ideals, art, and from the soaring spirit of man. When both are present and strong in him, he knows fulfillment and the only immortality worthy of a man.

The sadistic and masochistic impulses are in all of us. When we bring the desire to persecute others under control, we do so largely because sadism is socially frowned upon. A certain degree and kind of sadism is

often present in the creation of drama, of religion, of the love life. In these circumstances when it is a controlled thing serving a high purpose, it is socially valuable.

The impulse to persecute oneself is far less public and therefore less often condemned but it is potentially as vicious as sadism. How much a part this plays in religious conversion is hard to say but it is very definitely there.

External gods are often used by masochists to intensify their desire for self humiliation. Thus humility, that much praised virtue, when carried to extreme is just as bad as extreme pride. Maybe they are one and the same impulse.

A healthy pride, one viewed with skepticism and a sense of humor, and a healthy humility, also viewed with skepticism and a sense of humor, are definitely good things.

7

Psychiatrists say, "It's fun to be normal!"

They say this in order to encourage what they believe to be more rational behavior patterns.

Is what the normal, that is—the average person, does really more rational?

I think that it is the attitudes of the average person that permit periodic wars to occur, the rich to exploit the poor, races to be unjustly treated.

To my way of thinking real rationality is the province

of the superior mind. What is true of rationality can with equal validity be said of morality.

The average person is a creature of social habits which, because they are popularly espoused, are labelled moral.

In reality only the superior man is moral because he lives by what he himself determines to be the wisest pattern of behavior. He has the intelligence to see, the courage to choose, and sufficient self-respect to honor his own interpretation of life.

8

Finally, there is immature religion and mature religion. I would summarize them briefly as follows:

Immature religion thinks in competitive terms, that is, always thinks of itself as The One and The Only.

Immature religion is dualistic. The good and bad are infinitely separable, irreconcilable, and therefore it must have a devil as well as a god, a hell as well as a heaven.

Immature religion is fear-driven. Thus the mistakes of men have cosmic and eternal significance. Thus it is negative (often so very positively negative!) and pessimistic about the nature of man.

Growing out of the above, immature religion depends greatly upon group approval.

Immature religion is credulous in the extreme, always looks for signs and wonders.

Immature religion needs an after-life because it is inadequate for this one.

The gods of immature religion are always external ones.

Mature religion is cooperative. It sees that there are many pathways that lead to the good (or god) and welcomes them all.

Mature religion accepts no dichotomy of body and spirit, holding that life is of a piece, having warp and woof but one cloth.

Mature religion is love-freed. Thus it is constructive and optimistic about human nature. It sees failure to grow as the only important mistake of man.

Mature religion is unafraid to stand alone.

Mature religion defines faith as a creative attitude toward life rather than as the acceptance of a set of beliefs about life.

Mature religion sees heaven as a symbol of clear thinking and freedom and hell as a symbol of confusion and constriction. Thus it does not concern itself with any after-life, being adequate for this one.

The gods of mature religion are always internal ones.

It takes a maturely religious person to say, "I am all the god there is at this particular point in the universe."

In the chapters that follow I hope to expand these brief summaries.

Chapter 2

THE PROJECTED GODS

"There is something out there! I know there is!" She clings to him and shudders and holds her breath and listens toward the darkness and the wind.

"Rubbish!" he tells her, "Your imagination is working overtime."

Then to prove his point he takes a flashlight and goes out. He walks around the suspect clump of trees and through them and returns to the house and to the woman standing at the window.

"Nothing. Nothing at all," he says.

Because she has confidence in him, she holds his arm only lightly now and still looks and listens toward the trees outside the house.

Thus have the boogies and ghosts and gods of men always arisen. They are projections of the human mind under the impetus of some emotion, fear principally but also awe and wonder.

When we were very small our parents had for us certain superhuman qualities. At a later stage of our

development they lost these qualities and they were then projected (transferred) into the universe to become a projected god, stronger, more fearful or more beautiful and just than our parents.

As one becomes an adult he becomes his own parent, that is, when he really accepts himself on an adult level. Then the projected god becomes unnecessary. An adult becomes his own god.

Let us repeat the above with slight variation.

A child's confidence goes first to his parents and he then hopes to get the world on a platter. In time he learns that his parents are not all-powerful nor all-wise. Next he makes parents out of school teachers, preachers, and others. Then he turns to a projected god held out to him by parents and church. Again he looks for the world on a platter but in time he is disillusioned and he finds out this god is really impotent.

Finally, if he is wise and grows into real adulthood, he rests his confidence in the universe, in man, and very much in himself.

This process is so simple one wonders why it takes so long for men to figure it out. Of course the answer to this is plain. Many obstacles are put in the way of understanding by those who have superstitious fear of knowledge.

Becoming one's own father increases one's responsibility but it also brings its own pleasures: self-confidence, authority, the conscious use of life for worthy ends.

Wrote Jerome Frank, "The discovery of the humanity, the fallibility of the father is the beginning of wisdom for the child."

To reach religious maturity men must rid themselves of non-existent gods (the projected ones). They must learn the virtue, the power and practical worth of self authority.

The childish will always look for infallibility and certainty. The adult reconcile themselves to fallibility and indeterminism.

The childish would reduce and, in fact, eliminate continuous creativity. The adult accept the latter as opportunity and danger and hope.

The security of man does not depend upon an unchanging universe any more than the security of the swimmer depends upon water not moving. Man is like this swimmer in that his security lies mostly in himself, his attitudes and actions. If he loses his head, his reasoning power and emotional stability, he could drown.

Growing up means throwing off dependence upon external authority. It means self-reliance, responsibility. It means questioning dispassionately the past.

A god exists for people who believe in him. That god does not exist for people who do not believe in him.

No god exists for people who do not believe in any god. Yet these people are not without criteria by which to measure the quality of their thoughts and the validity of their deeds.

A belief in a god, on the highest level of thought and

feeling, is a means by which the individual may see himself more objectively. By seeing himself more objectively, he sees his universe more objectively. In this sense believing in a god may be good for people. It may be spoken of as a wise use of the imagination. To the believer, however, it is no act of the imagination.

Man does not usually look objectively at his own attitudes though doing so may help him (sometimes, of course, it does just the opposite) to look with greater objectivity at others and at his universe.

Put another way, believing, that is high level believing, does not make a man self-conscious so much as it makes him universe-conscious.

The projected gods are like mirrors by means of which men see themselves and life. One ought to be as critical of his gods as he is of mirrors because a poor mirror can present a very distorted picture.

2

“The world is so full of a number of things
I’m sure we should all be as happy as kings.”

It is precisely because the world is so full of things that the mind of man is greatly puzzled and confused. To clarify matters he must see relationships of cause and meaning. The need to simplify the multiplicity of his experiences drives him eventually to the idea of one source of power, one being the simplest number. It is for this reason that monism will always have more ad-

herents than a pluralistic interpretation of the universe but it may not be any truer on this account.

Added to the need to simplify is the tendency to personalize because we are persons. To see things in terms of themselves rather than in terms of ourselves is a difficult intellectual feat and one never completely accomplished. Thus we are always faced with the question: Are we reading this out of the universe or reading it into the universe?

Perhaps there is no final answer to such a question but awareness of its existence may free one to some degree from projecting into the universe a personality. Such a one will not need a personal god to explain to himself life's meanings.

3

"It is not in our stars, dear Brutus, that we are underlings, but in ourselves."

Here is a realist speaking, refusing to project his gods into the universe. This is a very responsible attitude though Cassius has an ulterior motive in expressing it.

Sometimes when one gets rid of these projections he also gets rid of the emotions that caused them. Not so, however, if he merely shifts his emotions, say from fear to hatred, but by substituting fact for fancy.

The impulse to personalize the universe and to project upon it the Great Father is a poetic one.

There is a deep kinship between the aesthetic and

the mystical experience. Both convey their own kind of truth and both become more or less ridiculous when they assume that theirs is the ultimate or total truth.

Both truths are partial and are projections of emotions in terms that satisfy the five senses. Both at their highest levels are sensuous expressions. They are not really means of getting away from life but of drawing closer to life. At the height of such enthusiasm it is only natural that they mistake the part of life experienced so intensely for the whole of life.

If then man is so made that he will project his gods upon the universe, is this necessarily bad? What possible good is there in it? Are there limitations that ought to be respected? How can one best relate himself to the universe?

I do not know that I can answer all these questions. One thing, however, is sure. The projections of man are never bigger nor better than he is.

4

Most of the projected gods are herd products and as such are often crude and sometimes savage. Time, however, and great poets and thinkers can soften and ennoble them.

It took centuries for the barbaric Yahweh, fierce and tribal, to become the god projected by Hosea and Micah.

A similar evolution occurred in ancient Greece and the gods projected by Homer are vastly improved characters over their earlier prototypes.

Socrates wanted to improve the gods still more but the herd was not ready and he paid for his "crime" with his life.

It is reported that when missionaries first go to remote places and learn the local language, they have to choose with some care the word for "god" they will use and can develop most successfully. Usually a lesser known god with a minimum of associations is chosen, then they can freely and slowly reveal his character and present him as an indigenous product, a sort of local god who made good!

5

The child said, "They told me that if I prayed, God would come into my heart. I did and He didn't."

This kind of religious teaching that starts with an external god is fallacious in the extreme. If there is any deity he (or it) is first and last to be found in the human heart. He is the Life Force, the idealism, the capacity to grow, the capacity for self-realization.

Any external god is assumed, projected. Such gods are largely products of wishful thinking.

Man's belief in magic is endless. Once magic and medicine were one. Today medicine is very advanced because it does not depend upon magic. Religion, likewise, needs continually to divest itself of the tendency to be "holy magic." Only thus can it lose its adolescent character and become adult.

The only legitimate sphere of magic in the contempo-

rary world is in the arts, theater, painting, sculpture, music.

There is no Great Magician to make come true all the wishful thinking of man.

It is not wrong to wish but the wish must be linked to a callus on the hand, to straight, hard thinking, to orientations in terms of possibilities—and the possibilities of life are quite tremendous enough but these possibilities are not easily or quickly or effortlessly realized.

6

If you want to find a god, first view with humor and skepticism all external projections. Look within and do not be afraid.

Without faith in self there is no faith in any god, only a superstition about religious reality.

Faith is compounded of imagination, emotion, intellection. It is an attitude toward life.

7

Primitive man looked into a pool of clear water and saw his own image. He reasoned, "There is another me."

Thus arose the dichotomy of man and his spirit.

Primitive man heard the wind in the trees and the ripple of water rushing over stones and he reasoned that all things are dualistic. There is the thing and there is its spirit.

The logical faculty of primitive man is not as simple and clear as here stated. The above is a generalized and simplified interpretation.

Jacob dreamed of angels descending and ascending a ladder to heaven. When he awoke he said, "God is here (in this foreign place) and I never knew it!"

Obviously Jacob had believed in a god who inhabited other and more familiar places.

Jacob saw his god as separate from himself. Thus it is with all primitive and immature people. They have great difficulty in believing that the kingdom of their god is within themselves.

Yet there is no real proof in the world for the existence of any god outside of ourselves. Such gods are always read into the universe and for this very reason they are always given an anthropological character. Each is man writ large.

8

In contradistinction to the external gods is an internal one. Is he or it any less of a projection?

I think so. I would define the internal god as that within us which longs for wholeness, fulfillment, growth. These capacities are in all of us. They are in plant and animal as well, that is, not the longing but the capacity for growth. This is the reality by which we ought to measure any external gods.

Willy-nilly we are ultimately forced to evaluate our

gods by what they do to and for man. Man is not a perfect yardstick but he is the only measuring device we have.

The dualism of man and his spirit is an illusion. Equally so is the dualism of man and god as separate entities.

Man and his spirit are one and the same thing. Man and god are one and inseparable.

Man can be true or untrue to himself but he cannot be true or untrue to anything outside himself.

Belief in a god on the highest level of thought is simply belief in oneself and in one's innate capacity.

Those who believe in external gods generally evaluate any internal gods or internal standards of living by the external ones. Now inasmuch as the external gods are a herd product, this is the same as saying that herd thought is more reliable than individual thought which is the very opposite of the truth. Herd thought is always the lowest common denominator of human thought and feeling.

9

The traditional gods should be given a kick in the pants occasionally (objective criticism) to wake them up. Too much uncritical praise makes them lazy and bilious.

A living god must be born anew every day.

Failure to throw off the old gods who fitted the needs

of other peoples and other times is an indication of mental and emotional laziness and evidence of spiritual decay.

Men commonly overrate their gods and consequently underrate themselves.

Like orphaned children they tend to invent the god parent they think they need.

Like all the hungry they often consume that which is not really very healthy and call it good because to them it appears better than nothing though it may be slow poison.

Before there were men on the earth, there were no gods.

If ever there cease to be men on the earth, there will again be no gods.

As long as there are men on the earth, there will be gods.

Man is the inventor of all gods and this may, in the long measure of history, be his greatest achievement.

When one says that a thing is an invention he is not necessarily implying that it lacks reality or truth. A car, a radio, an earth satellite are inventions. They are real and they are one expression of truth. They satisfy physical needs. The gods satisfy psychic needs.

Chapter 3

THE DEIFICATION OF PERSONS

Twenty years ago when Mahatma Gandhi was at his height he was the subject of innumerable magazine articles and some books. It was common for the writers to say explicitly or to imply that of course Mr. Gandhi would be deified by the Indian people after his death. In the years that have passed since his death I have looked in vain for evidence of this deification. Perhaps the process is slower than I had imagined it would be. Maybe something else needs to be said. I think now that the writers of the pieces may have been a little smug, assuming that we, advanced, enlightened westerners, would not deify a person but that they, the ignorant and superstitious masses of India, would.

I venture the opinion that the tendency to deify is far from dead anywhere in the world.

The first gods were men of unusual power, cruel and despotic. Before the advent of these gods men, in the childhood of the race, had vague and sometimes very terrible fears of any extra-human force. Then the

despotic leaders arose, flourished for a time, finally lost power with their waning physical strength, were killed and eaten in order that their power might be taken on by their would-be successors. During his heyday the followers attributed to the leader something more than human power.

There are several interesting things to be noted about these early gods. The thing that made them gods, having the power of life and death over the followers, was the attribution of extra-human power by the followers. Gods are made by the beliefs of the masses of men.

The second interesting thing to be noted about these gods is that they were eventually killed and eaten by their followers. Here is a prototype of the Pascal feast and the Eucharist.

Now let us cast about for contemporary examples of the deification process at work.

The fuss made over royalty by Americans is clear indication of how little more advanced we really are than were our barbaric ancestors. Anyone with wit enough to come in out of the rain knows how decadent in the extreme contemporary royalty is. They are the commonest of commoners whom the accident of birth and local custom have put on a pedestal. Nothing inside them is royal, least of all their blood. It is all external trappings. Yet behold the fuss made by the press of the U. S. A. in response to the wishes of their subscribers!

The same process of deification occurs with the currently popular entertainment leaders. They are put on

pedestals, worshipped, and the daily conduct of the followers is influenced by these gods.

In a sense both of these types of contemporary gods are killed and consumed by their followers but not in the old barbaric sense. The trivia of the life of contemporary gods are masticated daily by their followers until finally the followers get tired of the diet. Then the power of these gods wanes only to be succeeded by the rising power of other gods.

It takes herd thought and imagination to manufacture bigtime ghosts, devils and gods.

There is something in man that loves a mystery and the more far-fetched the better. The popularity of Bridey Murphy hinges on this fact. When the to-do over this contemporary ghost is finished and the ghost finally laid to rest, it will be succeeded one day by another ghost, equally phony and equally intriguing to the popular imagination.

The devil whose manufacture bears a recent date is the Communist party in the U. S. A. I do not here refer to the exceedingly small band of genuine, dyed-in-the-wool Communists. I refer to the Boogie created by newspapers, magazines, and certain political figures. The Boogie or devil, like the genie in Pandora's box, once released quickly assumed proportions far beyond the size of the box, a proportion governed by fear, imagination, and a certain degree of manipulation.

At the time of the discovery of this particular Boogie little Jack Horner's popped up all over the landscape,

claimed credit for the discovery, said in effect, "What a big boy am I!"

Time, however, played a dirty trick on these little Jack Horners. It dissipated the genie or devil or Boogie until now the populace assumes that the F. B. I. can handle it. And the little Jack Horners whimper in their various corners, deflated along with their devil.

The herd created this devil by believing in its existence. It was deflated when the herd had masticated it and consumed it and was no longer interested in it.

Some of the deification of persons indulged in by man takes place very slowly. Such gods are likely to rise to great height and have quite an enduring influence. The deification of Abraham Lincoln is an example of this. Here was a great and good man who was also a canny politician, a man of tremendous strength but also possessed of weaknesses. Projected upon the national and international stage he slowly assumed a god-like eminence. This god has done much good in the world. The dignity of man has profited by the deification of Abraham Lincoln. This god has also done some small amount of harm, which is true of all gods.

Many presidents of the United States, many great political and military figures, are to some extent deified in their lifetimes. It generally takes twenty-five or more years to pull the deification pedestal out from under most of these gods and to remove their halos. Naked then they stood and mankind is then a little ashamed that his ancestors worshipped at some of these shrines.

No doubt the most enduring of gods in the western world is Jesus of Nazareth. Very little is really known about this man. The mythus has long obscured the history. He seems to have been a peasant from the northern part of Palestine. It is extremely unimportant but perhaps he was a bastard with a Roman father and a Jewish mother. He may have been a carpenter by trade. It is recorded that he could read and write. This may be so. He became a street teacher and preacher in the fashion of the Jewish prophets. He came to an untimely end due perhaps to unfashionable or even subversive political and economic and religious ideas.

The teachings attributed to this man are cluttered up with ideas developed by lesser men in the early church of the first, second and third centuries after his death. All these are thrown together in a heap called the New Testament.

Perhaps the most prominent individual responsible to a large extent for the deification of Jesus was that Johnny-come-lately the Apostle Paul, a man who never saw or heard Jesus in person but only by hearsay and vision, and who interpreted him in the light of his (Paul's) Mithraistic and Pharisaic education.

Something of the personality of Jesus is doubtless to be found in the New Testament. This is the only and almost incredible miracle of the book.

At its best the New Testament perhaps deserves to be ranked alongside the Bhagavad Gita as one of the high

points in man's religious development. At its worst, the less said the better.

The idea of killing and eating the god, even symbolically, in the hope of taking on his power, is pure magic. It has no place in the rational part of man's life. Acceptance of it hinges on a belief in magic.

Certain churches believe that in the Eucharist an act of Divine Magic occurs. They refer to this as the Miracle of the Eucharist. This is a more euphonious phrase, more socially acceptable. But let's face it, miracle is just another word for magic. Anyone who believes in miracles believes in magic. This is the long and short of it.

It is undoubtedly much more difficult for organized religion to get away from magic than it is for medicine or science generally to get away from magic. Quackery in the medical field and much of the advertising of modern medicine, however, still tie in to the popular belief in magic. Examples are "magic" "wonder" "miracle" drugs. Currently the magic seems to go out of the drugs in a very short time but the popular mind does not change and the new drugs succeeding the old promise the same wonder, magic, and miracle. A sane cautious, honest report of medical advance is generally skipped over hastily by the populace, if read at all. Popular faith is rarely tempered by sane doubts. Perhaps this is just as well because when the mass of men doubt, they go the whole hog, throw out the baby with the bath, the good along with the bad.

A balance of faith and doubt could save the masses from their irrationalities but that much sanity is a little too much to expect, I suppose. Magic and miracle are the sugar coating with which the mass of men must enclose ideas and experiences in order to make them palatable. Magic, miracle, superstition are all of a piece, different descriptions of the same mental make-up.

For example, take the word superstition. It might be defined as an irrational faith, a faith that cannot stand the light of reason.

Now any faith of man that cannot stand the light of reason has some relationship to insanity. It is not that every superstitious person is insane. Far from it. If they were consistent in their thinking they might be insane. Most of them are saved by their inconsistencies. Superstition, however, does open the door to a very unreal world and to believe consistently in an unreal world is to be insane.

How many people are driven to insanity by religion has, of course, never been tabulated. They must number in the millions.

The urge to deify must be watched with care. The urge that interprets life as magic, miracle, superstition is the least valuable part of the religious experience of man.

Perhaps there is something healthy in the fact that man has also a tendency to kill and eat his gods. In the long run it may be that the instinct that drives him to do this is sanity reasserting itself. I do not know.

I think, however, that the difficulty of man occurs at the point of his religious thinking where he assumes that it is perfectly valid for him to measure the finite world with an infinite yardstick. I mean by this that however man arrives at his creation of gods, once the deification process is complete, he then assumes that the god is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Bear in mind that this is a projected god.

Next he tries to measure man's life, purposes, hopes and so on by "the will of god." How different is this from the rational processes of scientific thinking!

Science says that the universe, as far as we know, is finite. Religious thinking says that the universe is infinite. These are not as contradictory statements as they appear. Religion here is dealing with the unknown about which it can only make assumptions by means of the "inductive leap." Science deals only with the known and whenever it looks at the material life of the universe, it finds it measurable. This is what science means by saying that the universe is finite. As far as the "infinite" universe is concerned, science is agnostic. It may be infinite. It may have definite termini.

According to speculative thinking, whether scientific or religious, the universe is infinite. At this point science says that the only reasonable way to deal with this "infinite" universe is to measure it with finite yardsticks. I think it is possible and desirable for religious men to be equally rational and to measure their "infinite" universe by means of finite yardsticks.

All of religious thinking and practice should be tested by what it does to and for the life of the individual man. The guide for rational religion comes from Protagoras. "Man is the measure of all things." This attitude was once echoed by Jesus. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." All gods, all eternal verities should be regularly and rigorously tested by this yardstick. When such a yardstick is accepted the magical and miraculous fall away and superstition loosens its hold over the mind of man. Personified gods lose their halos but the real and valid truths of religion remain.

It requires a considerable degree of maturity to accept this point of view. Any attack on the currently fashionable gods is always viewed with suspicion by the mass of men. To question the validity of the popular faith is fraught with a considerable amount of danger even in Christian countries because those who believe in an irrational interpretation of religion, believe in it violently. At this point they reveal they have very little sense of humor, almost no love, and no room at all for skepticism.

One should not rest his philosophy of religion upon Jesus, the god, or upon any other god or any other man. He should rest it solely upon his own experiences and evaluations. This is part and parcel of becoming an integrated person.

Chapter 4

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN SUFFERING

No religion worthy of the name can ignore the fact of suffering and particularly human suffering. Certain dread diseases bring it to the mind of all. The accidents of life which cripple and maim, the terrible wounds of war, the mental wounds of our anti-human civilization, all bring to our consciousness the sufferings of our fellows.

One cannot be alive and be an ostrich. The wounds are there and to some extent within ourselves.

The deeply religious man whose mental attitudes are oriented toward the total universe as he experiences it, has to accept the fact of suffering and it in turn colors his response to life and particularly to human beings.

A great deal of escapism is indulged in by those who cannot or will not face the fact of suffering. A large percentage of the funds contributed in group efforts to alleviate suffering represents escapism. The contributors do not wish to think about suffering, partly because they believe that they individually cannot do anything about

it. For a dollar they can sigh and forget about the whole business. A fence made of dollars, however, cannot hide the suffering of man. It has to be faced and accepted as part of the burden of life.

2

We talk very glibly about facing the facts of life but our phrase needs a slight extension. The maturely religious recognize the necessity of facing the facts of life and death.

It has been noted that facing the inevitability of one's own demise will make one a philosopher. I would not guarantee this but accepting this eventuality for himself and those he loves is a must in any sane, serene, realistic philosophy of living.

I still remember vividly how I felt some thirty years ago when my brother died. We had played and fought and loved each other and when his death came suddenly, within a span of five days, and though I was only nineteen then, a surprisingly constructive thought came to me, "My brother is dead, gone forever, but somewhere in this world is another brother who needs me and whom I need." Within a two year period I met such a one and we have been friends ever since.

The new brother was no reincarnation of the old. He was an entirely new and different person. My flesh and blood brother perished but the fact of "brother," that

need and capacity for intimate companionship, remained.

This leads me to the observation that any love of man or woman that does not increase our capacity for loving the human family, and any love of man or woman which, when severed by death, does not unite the remaining one more deeply with mankind, is certainly a warped emotional experience. There is something radically wrong with it. Perhaps it contained too much possessiveness and not enough love, too much intaking and not enough outgoing.

3

If one is religiously adult, he faces and accepts the suffering of humanity as his own. More than this, he realizes that there is one realm, in his own thoughts and attitudes, in which he can profoundly influence life so he develops what William James was wont to call a religion of "healthy-mindedness." In this there is a sense of detachment from the ills (*per se*) and a strong sense of attachment to the healing forces of life.

At first glance this seems like an escape device, a shutting of eyes to facts, but instead it is simply a refusal to glory in ills, thus acknowledging their superiority to health, and to glory rather in health and the continuity and growth of life as the more creative and useful force.

Serenity is certainly one of the most useful and health-giving attitudes one can develop: a refusal to be excited about every little "to-do" on the surface of life and a quiet excitement about the deeper and more lasting things that are happening.

It is hard to accept the death of someone with whom you have lived. Association made his particular appearance, his walk, his gestures familiar. His manner of speaking, the exchange of ideas and experiences and sentiments, his work and play, served to make him a part of your daily life. So much had this been accepted that, after his death, you keep expecting to see again a face that is familiar and you listen to hear a voice that is forever stilled.

Temporarily it may seem incredible that days and hours should pass, that people should go about their daily tasks, because for you time has come to a full stop.

This apparent stopping is part of the process of bringing you to an emotional acceptance of facts. It is evidence of the healing process going on.

A girl of twenty-one dies in an auto accident. The mother asks, "Why?"

An eighty year old, a very good man all his life, suffers horribly with cancer a year before dying. A nephew wonders why.

Such a question is directed to the universe or to some god.

It is a big question. It asks: is there a purpose in life, or death?

In response to the deeply felt and sometimes unexpressed why of man in the face of such realities, fables are often told.

"God needed your daughter in heaven far more than she was needed here."

This kind of pious lie is a terrible cruelty to inflict upon human beings.

Look at the implications of it. One, it implies that the god referred to is impotent without certain people. Two, it relegates the business of being a living person to insignificance in the eyes of that particular god.

On these two counts alone such lies should be suppressed.

The desire to mitigate sorrow is natural enough and to be commended but this is not the way.

Far better to tell the truth: that death, in itself, is without cosmic meaning.

There are two kinds of meaning of events. One,

cosmic meaning read "into" the universe as if the universe were speaking to us. Two, "natural" meaning, man's evaluation of his experience in order that he may learn from it.

7

The good, the greatest, the noblest of souls have often come to violent ends and there was nothing in their lives to warrant this conclusion.

Socrates, one of history's most germinal thinkers, was forced to drink the hemlock.

Jesus was Crucified.

Lincoln and Gandhi were shot.

Why? These men certainly did not deserve these ends yet they got them.

Death often comes in unexpected ways and it is never valid to interpret it as some sort of cosmic punishment. The universe never punishes. It is perfectly indifferent to our existence or non-existence. Here one could substitute the word "god" for universe.

The natural meaning of Socrates' death: it is dangerous to think.

The natural meaning of Jesus' death: it is dangerous to be a saint.

Gandhi's death means that it is dangerous to be non-violent and a leader of non-violence.

Lincoln's death means that it is dangerous to be an honest politician with great human sympathy.

Death often comes quickly, unexpectedly, "before their time," and not only to the prominent.

The more insignificant the deceased the more difficult it is to define a meaning for the death. The fact is, that, in the case of the old man who died of cancer and the young girl who was killed in an auto accident, their deaths had no special meaning.

Why then did they die? Life is just that way.

Looked at another way, it is not necessary to give answers to such whys. The fact to which the mourners must adjust is *that* they died and now life has to be lived without them.

There is certainly no cosmic reason why one catches a fatal disease any more than there is a cosmic reason why a young grasshopper gets stepped on.

Let us face the fact that the universe is not trying to tell us anything by means of the death of anyone.

All cosmic meanings are read into life (or death) as a means by which, it is hoped, the living might profit.

Man, however, does not really profit by pious lies. His respect for himself, his fellows, and his universe is undermined by them.

In the presence of death we must simply adjust to life as quickly and as best we can.

8

In the case of the suffering of man through dread diseases or other causes, the best we can do is to face

honestly and sensibly the facts, doing what we can both to alleviate the suffering and to eliminate the malady.

There is no point in hating the hard facts of life nor of sugar-coating them. Calmness and courage are much better guides to intelligent action.

9

Of voluntary euthanasia: here is a point where the adolescent, that is, most of mankind, meet suffering with emotion and superstition rather than good sense and much alleged kindness turns out to be, more often than not, cruelty.

To an animal in the same fix, shooting is considered kindness.

No such mercy is extended to human beings.

Most people consider suicide to be a crime.

The feeble-minded at the lowest levels and the hopelessly insane are perpetuated in the name of mercy.

Once I lived in a community where a hospital for epileptics and a school for the feeble-minded was located. In the course of a year there were a dozen funerals of the latter. Only once in that year was any relative of the deceased present.

Here is the fact: it is difficult and most times impossible to care for the utterly helpless in a private home. The rights of those adequate to life must take precedence over those totally inadequate to life and they do.

One day the race of men will be intelligent enough

and courageous enough to face this problem honestly but not yet.

Along with the general problem of human ecology that of perpetuating the unfit must eventually be faced.

To the adult, thinking, human being the problems of human ecology are of greater moment than those precipitated by hydrogen bombs or earth satellites.

10

The right to breed is simply not an inalienable right.

The right to live as someone else's burden is not an inalienable right.

The right to suffer or to cause untold suffering to others is not an inalienable right. In respect to the latter, we annihilate murderers, rapists, kidnappers and we probably should.

The right to end one's own life, so long as in doing so other lives are not endangered, is, as far as I am concerned, pretty much one's own business.

A religiously adult human being should become his own god and make his own decisions.

11

Those who face death and suffering honestly can live creatively. They build on a secure foundation.

Those who face death and suffering only with emotions, prejudices, superstitions build only on sand.

There should be no doubt about it, the superstitious and the adolescently religious will always regard facing the facts of life and death with some alarm and will even consider it, in specific cases, a crime.

12

There are many instances of close family ties where the demise of the key member forced the remaining to rejoin the human family. In this case death performed a needed service.

Too close family ties can be motivated by fear of man.

Learning to love human beings not bound to one by ties of blood is a tremendously important and adult accomplishment. It makes for health of body and soul.

When we have learned to face the facts of life and death intelligently and courageously we are adults and on the side of whatever gods may be.

We are then actually on the side of the saints for they act with far greater intelligence than the average of men.

Chapter 5

COMMUNICATION

At an impressionable age I had the good luck to get acquainted with the grandmother of my cousin who was a professional fortune teller. She had told fortunes since her early teens and had followed this profession for over fifty years when I knew her. Many people found her hard to get along with but because I was friend to her grandchild, I experienced no difficulties with her.

The fortune teller was a woman of limited formal education. She could read and write. The rest of her education had come by way of books and lectures, usually the free ones, and the observation of people.

I was astonished the day I discovered that this old woman had read Annie Besant and other world figures of theosophical bent. The lectures she attended were usually those dealing with metaphysical or occult subjects. In this field of her interest she was well informed.

When I was seventeen she told my fortune for the first time. She told it with cards. I am afraid I paid little attention to what she then said. To me fortune telling

was just a sociable game. My own grandmother used to indulge it by way of coffee grounds.

After I had reached voting age I visited the fortune teller occasionally and had the cards read. It was about this time that I began to ask myself: what is there really to this? And why do seemingly intelligent people come back again and again to her? How much of what she tells has been inadvertently told her by the one having his fortune told? How much is keen observation and sensitive rapport to people? How much of the "fortune" was supplied by information from others, gossip?

Since I liked the old lady I never told her my doubts about her business. Perhaps it was about this time that she told me, not unkindly, "You are a snob. One day you will laugh at this business."

I cannot truthfully say that I made any scientific analysis of her techniques but I did this. I reasoned that if what she told me of myself she read out of my face, voice, gestures, then what would happen if I kept a poker face and said little?

I tried this and the result was a very unsatisfactory reading. Then I knew that my guess was at least partially right.

I asked myself a further question. If she cannot really tell the future, what is her service to mankind that brings her customers to her? Is it merely entertainment?

In time I concluded that my old friend was a woman who understood remarkably well different types of people and that her real service was not merely enter-

tainment. She helped to explain you to yourself and helped to explain your friends and associates to you. She was, in short, a good counsellor who could tell you how best to deal with each.

What part did the cards play? They were merely a foil to evoke remarks from her and responses from you. She, however, really believed in the cards. As far as I was concerned I could not believe in them but beyond them I came to see her wisdom in human relations. She did communicate in this sense.

It will be well for the reader to know that the fortune teller was not an especially articulate woman. English was not her native tongue and it sometimes tripped her up. To get from her what she had to give, one had to get beyond the words to the constructive attitude. To accomplish this all one had to do was to be in some kind of rapport with her.

2

What I have just said of the old fortune teller may be true of most human communication. It requires getting beyond the actual words and to be in rapport.

For example, I first read Thoreau when I was sixteen. The author did not then very much appeal to me but for a long time after I associated him with 'wild apples' which I had just then discovered, both the essay and the apples.

Twenty years later I tried to read Walden and could

not finish the first chapter. Less than a year after this I was in the army and was faced with some long dull periods. I began to read some hitherto neglected works. Then it was that I read *Walden* through for the first time. Six months later I read it again.

Following this I read about Thoreau in "The Flowering of New England," in the biography by Canby and the one by Krutch and I read more of Thoreau's formal writing and from his notebooks. As a result, a man with whom I could not communicate at sixteen began to say a great deal to me in my late thirties and thereafter.

In time, of course, the initial novelty wore off and my capacity for skeptical appraisal returned and, respecting his limitations, I have learned much from Thoreau.

My change in receptivity took time and growth, perhaps certain types of experiences, the kind that make one fall back on his inner resources, to make communication with Thoreau possible.

3

Another point on communication. Since the author is now fifty years old I, like my contemporaries of similar vintage, have matured in a world in which psychology has emerged from its esoteric cocoon, gone through a very popular phase, matured into a very useful tool for man's understanding of himself.

Like many others I have read widely in this field but I am not in any sense a professional psychologist. I was,

however, for a dozen years a minister and I then found psychological insights extremely valuable in my work. My profession brought me into contact with a number of psychiatrists and psychiatric social workers and psychologists.

I found their world large and often confusing but occasionally very useful. Eventually, however, I came to see that psychologists were not greatly different from my old friend the fortune teller.

In place of cards and voices the psychologists use other data but arrive at similar conclusions and on occasion are similarly wise counsellors. The fortune teller depended wholly upon intuitive thinking. The psychologists depend more on deductive thinking, though not to the extent of outlawing intuitive hunches.

The communication of psychologists is different and difficult but must be listened to with the same good humor and skepticism before one can really learn from it.

I had a special reason to come to terms with modern psychology. Twenty years ago I married a clinical psychologist.

4

One simply cannot communicate well with any group or one unless he respects the biases and the limitations of that group or that one.

Take painting as an example.

In any given period certain styles are most popular

and other styles are neglected. This is particularly true in these days of conformity when information travels so rapidly. It has been said that when it clouds up in Paris, it rains in San Francisco, and in many another art center.

Pablo Picasso is not so important in himself as modern information services have made him. He fits the popular need for a symbol. As in the case of words one has to get beyond the symbols to meanings and one must bring his good humor and skepticism along if he would communicate.

The worship, the idolatry of anyone like Picasso is due in part to failure to understand and in part to a need to get rid of the person idolized. Blown up to giant proportions he is simply "too tall to dance with."

5

One day I stood in a barnyard talking with a farmer. His young son played near us. When the boy came over to us the farmer began to scold him.

"He's been a bad boy at school," he said to me while looking at the boy. "Always fighting with other boys!" The boy hung his head.

Verbally the farmer continued to scold but underneath his words was an emotional note of pride. When the boy wandered off the farmer confided to me that the boy had won all his fights.

In this instance what had the child heard as his father scolded him? The actual words or the note of pride?

It does not take a psychologist to answer this one.

When we were children the emotional overtones and undertones of speech meant more to us than the actual words. All or most of our hearing was on this emotional level. As we grew older and began to know better the meanings of words and ideas, we communicated on a second, the intellectual, level. All the while, however, the first level had not entirely disappeared from our consciousness.

In adult years we are compelled to communicate on the second level much of the time and we sometimes reach the point, by virtue of concentration on this level, where we forget that communication is going on at the primary level at the same time.

When we forget this, we put too much stock in the literal meaning of words. We become confused by them. We oversell ourselves or allow ourselves to be oversold on some people and some ideas simply because we have listened exclusively on the secondary level.

To get the most out of human communication we do well to remember that it always goes on, on these two levels, the emotional and the intellectual, simultaneously.

6

Psychologists use the terms "positive" and "negative" to describe an individual's emotional response to life situations, indicating he accepts or rejects them.

Positive, as so used, is equated to a large extent with the idea of success in the business of living.

Dr. Peale uses the terms similarly but his criteria of

success in living is more narrowly defined, equates more nearly to "middle class morality."

My old friend the fortune teller used positive and negative in a different sense. To her you were either a positive or a negative. Negatives were the more sensitive, the more easily led, the more harmonious. Positives were the more aggressive, the stronger willed, the more definite, often the cruder. Both types are necessary to the world and each gets along best with his opposite. You always marry an opposite. So my old friend believed.

She told me that negatives sometimes became more positive as they grew older, especially the intelligent ones. On the other hand positives never become negatives.

She never equated positive with success or negative with failure.

In the course of years I have sometimes found this characterization of people useful. I have had to learn to cope with many positives. Their positiveness was sometimes overwhelming, as in the case of my father, but by long and patient study I could work with them and still retain my identity. In the process I myself became more positive.

The positive is clear in his appraisals. He knows what he wants. For a negative to become more positive, he must leave off dreaming and think hard and clear and realistically. Only then can he have power to influence people and events.

The negative person, being more sensitive, is more often the artist but he cannot accomplish much until

his dreams and visions take definite form. We are attracted to statements that have a definite form. I do not mean here that we agree with them. We are less attracted, often repelled, by the vague and formless.

The particular definition and formation may not be very true, or deeply felt, or profound. In this case our interest soon falls away. But when it is true in a large sense and is deeply felt, since it has been given a positive form it acquires a certain magic in the process, a magic particularly associated with communication. So it endures.

It would be a mistake to assume that the great positive statements are an act of will. They are nothing of the sort. They come to the speaker, writer, artist, or what not, unbidden and out of his subconscious. The utterer himself may not know the real dimension of the truth he has expressed. The great positive statements are products of an individual's harmony with life, the needs of his times, and even the timeless.

7

There is, it seems to me, a distinct relationship between the aesthetic and the mystical experience. If, as I believe, art is the orderly development of the sensuous life of man, then this is the ground upon which the two are related for both of them may be so defined. This definition is a limited one and should never be thought of as exhausting the meanings of either.

Of the two, I believe art is the saner because it re-

sults in works whose enjoyment may continue for centuries. It is the more durable. Extreme mystics are, in my opinion, slightly "nuts." Whereas I find Mozart and Bach and Beethoven and Renoir and Gauguin and Titian and Tintoretto and Tolstoi and Dostoevsky and on and on, much more normal men. In fact certain extremes of mysticism appear to be a kind of spiritual masturbation. They are sensations without progeny.

Great and sane religion, on the other hand, causes men to love mercy, to do justice, to walk humbly with life. It makes men to love the good, the true, and the beautiful with the whole mind and strength and body and enables them to see their neighbors as parts of themselves.

Chapter 6

ANENT CERTAIN FICTIONS COMMONLY ACCEPTED AS DOGMAS

At the heart of traditional Christianity are three fictions which time has haloed. I believe that if religious thought among men is to become mature these fictions must be recognized for what they are and be discarded. They are right enough answers for the emotionally immature but not for adults.

The three fictions concern The Inspired Word, Original Sin, and Immortality.

2

Belief in The Inspired Word, and limiting this to the Hebrew-Christian Bible, is bound up with the mystery of writing itself, and with the origin of the aesthetic and the mystical experience.

All human communication is fallible yet once dogmatized (canonized) it is assumed to be infallible.

Even great words have a particular relevance in a

temporal setting. Out of this context they may or may not have a relevance.

Where inspiration comes from, whether from some god or not, no one knows. On this point it is well to be agnostic.

Too far removed from their proper context of experience inspired words lose value rapidly. Like coins, they do not have equal value in every country of the world.

Dogmatic religion is corrupted and perverted inspiration. Yet this is what respectable people and the worshippers of middle class morality clasp to their bosoms as a great treasure. In this they are accepting the counterfeit for the real.

It is in the nature of organized religion to dogmatize.

The only valid reason for studying the past is that we may better understand and cope with the present.

The only valid reason for studying future possibilities is that we may make better use of the present.

There is no life outside this fleeting moment. We must catch life on the fly or not at all.

Even concepts of god must be measured against the fact of the transitoriness of life.

Some people believe in a dead god, one who used to do great things and inspire great souls. These people think that somehow this god lost his voice once the Hebrew-Christian Bible was complete. Hence for these benighted souls there are no more inspired words.

Such people are the victims of organized religion

which canonized the writings of a particular period, saying in effect, "This is it, all of it, and all there will ever be."

Thus do organized religions always tend to mummify their gods.

When an otherwise intelligent man accepts a "canned theology" he is confessing his mental and emotional laziness.

For a potentially creative person this has serious implications, tragic. He becomes thus a propagandist peddling ideas others have developed. In short, he has nothing himself to communicate. This is really a profound personal pessimism. It says, "Of myself I am nothing, nothing at all."

This also indicates the tragedy of organized religion. It stultifies the soul.

To accept a "canned theology" is to clutter the mansion of life with second hand furniture.

It is far more important to learn to read the "book of life," that is to interpret one's own daily and yearly experience reasonably well than it is to learn to read any of the various Books of Life, for if we cannot learn from our day to day experiences we cannot learn from the Books of Life for they are simply records of other men's experiences and observations.

Perhaps it would be too much to say that St. Augustine invented Original Sin or even that he popularized it but it is incontrovertible that he gave the classical expression to the concept.

In substance the theory of Original Sin maintains that man is by nature evil, that he comes into the world equipped with an inherent propensity to do wrong. Of course St. Augustine added that only by the grace of god (that is, by Divine Magic) could man become good.

This theory of human behavior works excellently as a social control device. And this fact undoubtedly explains much of its popularity. Anyone who accepts it, is led easily by one or another of the salvation cults and when that cult is the politically official one, then the concept is even handier as a social control. It has had particular use and value in authoritarian regimes. Politically it says to the citizen, "You are nothing but a poor miserable sinner and therefore it will be better for you to allow the divinely ordained powers to decide the major issues of life for you."

St. Augustine lived approximately four hundred years after Christ and as soon as his idea became accepted dogma it, very naturally, was read back into the Hebrew-Christian scriptures.

Its adherents delighted in re-interpreting such passages as, "In sin did my mother conceive me." Of course, said the theologians, life without sin is inconceivable. An

exception had to be made, very naturally, in the case of the birth of Jesus. Thus arose the Immaculate Conception.

When dictatorial Protestant reformers like John Calvin arose they removed the "yoke" of Rome but they did not throw away the yoke, that is, the idea of Original Sin.

Instead they refurbished it, as it were, Protestantized it, and used it in the same manner as had their predecessors but Calvin, being a lawyer by training, gave a narrower and even more dogmatic interpretation to it.

Our western democracies arose largely out of ideas that were in opposition to Original Sin, principally, of course, the idea of the worth of the individual. The roots of democracy are humanistic, a faith in man and man's capacity for good.

Let us back up for a moment and take a look at the idea of sin itself. Some acts of men are called right and some are called wrong. What actually determines the difference and what is the significance of them in the total context of life?

Acts are labelled wrong when they are destructive to any given society's well-being. By a process of projection this "society's well-being" is equated with the will of God which, in turn, gives a cosmic importance to the rights and wrongs of men but most specifically to the wrongs.

Take for instance: a man shoots his grandmother.

Agreeing, for the sake of argument, that this is wrong

even though there may have been much in the way of extenuating circumstances still, how important is the act in the total context of life? It may be shocking but it is true that the act is really quite unimportant beyond a very limited space and time. If it happened in Cedar Rapids, it means absolutely nothing in Timbuctoo.

Suppose the grandson escapes from the scene of action and settles in some strange place and never for the remainder of his life commits any anti-social act. At his eventual demise the people of the second community might conceivably have occasion to say of him, "He was a good man and deserved to live forever."

At the same time his picture might still be in the Cedar Rapids police station together with words that say in effect, "This man is inherently evil and his name deserves to be blotted out of the Book of Life."

Now both communities might be right in their judgments considering the limits of space and time which bound them.

They would be wrong and very wrong indeed if they gave to the acts of the man a larger space-time relationship than their experience of the man warranted.

Yet that large projection of the act into a "sin" having cosmic and eternal importance is just what traditional religion always does.

To sum up: Original Sin is a theory used to back up local attitudes toward right and wrong. It backs them up by a process of distortion. A critical evaluation of the act would be in order but instead, since it is so difficult

to think, an emotional evaluation is given and largely accepted.

When the mistakes of men (their sins) are given a cosmic and eternal significance, relief must come only through Cosmic Magic and God then assumes the role of Cosmic Magician.

Guilt feelings are part of orthodox conversation techniques, that is, the evangelists deliberately induce guilt feelings just as a quack doctor reminds people that they are not "perfectly" healthy, and that, in fact, they may have hidden ailments. Succeeding in making people believe this, the remedy is then offered.

If one accepts the "call" to regeneration held out by the evangelist, he may experience a temporary relief from his real or imagined spiritual ailment. Inevitably, however, a day comes when he is somewhat ashamed of having allowed himself to be led down the ecclesiastical garden path. This comes when common sense reasserts itself. Then if he has matured sufficiently in the interim, he knows that he must work out his own philosophy of living, must stand on his own feet, evaluate his own life regardless of a world of adverse opinion.

In the final analysis there is only one unforgivable mistake: failure to grow.

To my way of thinking any religion which is passive and/or propounds a negative view of the human potential is escapist in the worst sense. While our senses are not perfect and our minds are not perfect, they are the

only equipment we have for receiving impressions and evaluating them and to deny this is to deny life.

4

"When Kiriwina boy die, where he go?"

"Go Tooma."

"Where is Tooma?"

A vague gesture. "There."

"Over the ocean?"

"Yes."

"You mean that it is an island like Kiriwina?"

"Yes. Island."

"Palm trees on island?"

"Yes," and a laugh of assurance.

"Bananas?"

"Yes yes."

"People and houses?"

"Yes."

"They eat and dance on Tooma?"

"Yes."

"And love the girls, like on Kiriwina?"

"Yes yes."

It sounded like a very desirable place. "I think when I die, I go Tooma."

"Ha ha. No no. You white man. You go hebbin!"

The dream of living forever is a persistent one. Man is so made that he can accept, can come to believe in

many things but the vast majority of men cannot so readily believe in their own total and eternal extinction as persons. They cannot believe that, like Rover, when they die, they die all over.

It would be ridiculous, however, to assume that the widespread persistence of an idea is any real guarantee of its truth.

Rather the widespread persistence of various ideas of immortality only indicates something about the emotional needs of man.

“Do I exist forever?” and “What happens after death?” are generally emotion-laden questions. Those who ask them are not seeking empirically valid truth. They are seeking emotion-satisfying truth. Criteria of objective evaluation in terms of ultimate likely reality mean nothing to a person seeking answer to an emotion-laden question.

For a wide variety of reasons men want to exist eternally.

Almost all who love deeply or create are likely to want such immortality in order that love and creation may go on.

Some, of course, believe in immortality for an opposite reason. They find life so unsatisfactory and are so ill-adjusted that they must have a world, happier, truer than this one. Immortality offers escape from insurmountable problems.

Most people simply cannot let life go, they grasp and

hold to it in great desperation. Holding life lightly, as something to be enjoyed as a flower is enjoyed, temporarily, is beyond them.

There may be a certain value in the widespread and persistent belief in immortality. I asked my Kiriwina friend,

“You afraid die, go Tooma?”

Again the assured laugh. “No. Me no ’fraid.”

To the extent that belief in immortality is an emotional sedative, there is probably little harm in it.

When, however, the belief in an after-life becomes such an opiate that it deadens one to the real problems and possibilities open to the living to benefit himself and his posterity then it becomes a harmful belief.

A vital, alert, affirmative personality reveling in daily and long time human problems is most likely to feel, like Nehru, that he does not have time to waste on such speculations as personal persistence involves.

There is another kind of person who, while he cannot believe in personal immortality, does believe in the persistence of values from age to age. Such a one may feel that an individual life does not greatly matter but that the life of the race is of tremendous importance; or, that while his own ideas and thought are not too significant, the ideas and thoughts of thinking men are.

It takes a lot of ego to believe in personal persistence beyond the grave. It takes a lot of ego to believe that the thoughts and actions of any man have cosmic and eternal significance. Those described in the preceding

paragraph have outgrown this tremendous and quite childish ego. To them "eternal life" is not a quantitative extension of our days on some other plane but is rather a qualitative deepening of our life on this particular plane. They are not concerned with how long but with how much they live.

There are, of course, some people who believe in immortality because they do not believe in themselves. It is easier for them to throw the problem into the lap of a father-god than it is for them to grow up and become their own father-god.

The maturely religious have a healthy respect for the past and traditions but they are not cowed by them. They have a respect for the right of the multitude to believe as they choose but are not coward enough nor lazy enough to accept mass opinion as their own.

There is a sense in which those who have lived among us will not die so long as we live. We were influenced by them. Some of our thoughts and words and actions were arrived at in response to them. By this means they were woven into the texture of our lives, affecting our very blood and bones. Long after, when other events and thoughts and personalities shall have crowded our consciousness and the deceased shall have been in part forgotten, they shall yet exist as an unseen and maybe unrecognized influence at the heart of our life.

Belief in a personal immortality is largely wishful thinking of those who feel that this life is not enough and

that it is not fair. Their belief is an expression of the "quiet desperation." They are like the one-legged man who mourns his loss and is solaced by the belief that in heaven he will have two good legs. No one can blame him for wishing but wishing will not make it so.

Heaven beyond this life is a compensation for those who have not "found" life today. These people steadfastly refuse to accept life as the feast and the drama that it is because they do not have the courage really to love themselves and through themselves, all of life.

Definitions of hell.

Hell is simply that state in which one ceases to hope, in which one feels unrelated to life, to people, to any worthwhile purpose.

Hell is confusion of thought.

Hell is a fiction, invented and perpetuated by the older generation for the purpose of scaring the devil out of the younger generation.

"Salvation" is a term that has been much pushed around but basically it means "emotional security."

Its opposite number, "lost," simply means "insecure emotional relationships."

Emotional security springs from right attitudes toward people and life in general: a love of people and an affirmation of life. Emotional insecurity springs from wrong attitudes.

Here the element of faith enters.

Faith may be defined as an attitude toward life or as

a set of beliefs about life. There is an important difference here. It deserves serious thought.

Sets of beliefs about God, man, immortality and such are intellectualizations. One may have many of these and hold them strongly and be a very miserable person: opinionated, gone to seed, drunk with words.

The more fundamental faith is the attitude toward life because it makes for fullness of living.

There is no such thing as an absolutely right belief or right thought. There is such a thing as right attitude and out of this comes right action.

Right belief and right thought are speculative and relative to a given context of information and assumptions.

Right attitude is having one's emotions focussed correctly and out of this comes a true picture of life; without it, all is distortion.

Right belief and right thought depend upon logic largely for their validity and, while it is a mighty tool, there is nothing under heaven which can lead men astray so quickly as logic.

Confidence men of all types, including religious confidence men, know this. Their success depends upon it.

Let one take the right attitudes toward life and his thoughts and beliefs can be trusted to take care of themselves.

Chapter 7

WORSHIP, MEDITATION, PRAYER

It is a cold and dark morning in January. The snowing has stopped but the wind has risen and where it has pushed around the corner of the farmhouse a long drift now stands. In some places this is as high as a man.

From the house a yellow light reaches out to show the curling ridge of the drift. A thin stream of white smoke comes from the chimney.

Now the back door of the house opens against the drift. A push, another push and then the farmer emerges, well wrapped and carrying a huge flat bowl from which a steam arises. He surveys the white terrain carefully and notes where the drift is lowest and he pushes himself slowly through it, holding the bowl above his head.

Now the going is a little easier, the soft snow only reaches his knees. He lowers his head and carries the bowl in front of him and passes the cow barn and hog shed and enters the woods.

For a quarter of an hour he trudges through the

woods with the bowl. By this time steam no longer comes from it. At last he reaches a large stump, waist high. He holds the bowl in his left arm and with his right he pushes snow from the stump. Then he sets the bowl down securely on it.

He looks around him at the dark woods.

Then, lowering his head into the wind, he plows back to the house.

Exactly what has happened in the above episode?

This farmer has placated with a bowl of cream grout, a porridge made from wheat and milk and topped with cinnamon, sugar, and butter, the "little men" who live in the woods.

Why has he done this?

Because he thinks the little men can cause calves to be born dead and next summer's wheat and oat heads to be devoid of milk.

The placation as here described did not take place in a far away country among primitive people nor in ancient times. It happened in Wisconsin in the eighteenthies and the placater was one of my own Norwegian ancestors.

Worship originated in placation such as this and the highly developed worship practices and attitudes of today in organized religion still have in them elements of placation.

Those who accept placation as a valid practice feel, "Well, it can't do any harm and it might do some good!" The same attitude causes other people to nail a

horseshoe over the barn door or to carry a rabbit's foot.

There are plenty of people whose attitude upon being baptized into the Christian church is placation.

There are those whose possession of the Hebrew-Christian Bible is an act of placation. If they were to voice their thoughts they might say, "It's good luck to have it around."

In the opening illustration an individual was performing an act of worship in which he was acknowledging an extra-human power. When a group worships in this or similar fashion much magic is added to the act, much drama to its performance, much poetry to its liturgy. It becomes a solemn social event.

A whole craft of priesthood arises with the development and refinement of worship.

Do-it-yourself practices are then frowned upon except as they are made subordinate to and integrally related to the group worship.

2

One step in the freedom of man from the corrupting influence of organized religion with its magic rituals is anti-clericalism. Anti-clericals may still accept the tenets of the religion while rejecting its priests for a variety of reasons.

A second step in freedom comes from a critical examination of the tenets of the religion for their truth and value.

Worship, meditation, and prayer are related words. When one is used, the others are involved. For purposes of thought they may be separated. There is a difference in accent between them. This will be apparent in the comments that follow.

Worship which began in placation can develop after centuries into the "celebration of life."

Placation is superstition, an irrational, fear-driven religious act.

On the other hand, "celebration of life" is rational even though its impulses come from the unconscious rather than from the conscious levels of mind and emotions.

Placation involves ceremonies, rites, and is most highly developed by groups rather than by individuals. Its practitioners believe that the ceremonies and rites have an inherent value.

Celebration of life gets away from ceremonies at the highest level. Just below this level it interprets ceremonies and rites symbolically, believing that in themselves these have no inherent value.

Placation is belief in Divine Magic.

Celebration of life springs from a deep, a pervasive recognition of the goodness of life.

Celebration of life becomes a daily experience of the individual. It does not depend upon any group-produced magic.

When worship is really a daily and spontaneous celebration, a looking at life and seeing its good and bad, its injustice and its justice, its beauty and ugliness, and in spite of these disparities, an affirmation that life is good, worth the effort, then woven thus into the texture of one's days, any need for collective worship forms and ceremonies decreases and may disappear entirely.

4

Further definitions of worship, meditation, prayer.

Worship is:

(1) words and actions ostensibly designed to please an external god, to placate him so that the individual may get into a better relationship with him. Such worship inevitably implies a belief in a god.

(2) a group or an individual pausing to get life into proper perspective, seeing what things are worth most and what are of secondary importance. This is "worthship."

Needless to say the latter are the more adult elements of worship and do not necessarily involve belief in any external deity. "Worthship" unites individual man with the race on the highest levels of thought and feeling.

Worship may produce a "holy glow" or it may produce better attitudes and better actions.

Life is centrifugal. It scatters and dissipates our

energies. Worship that is "worthship" is centripetal. It gathers and directs our energies to creative ends.

Meditation is the intellectual process of integration, involving as this does the clarification of thought by relating the thought of the individual to the great thoughts of great individuals of the present and past, a space-time relationship.

Meditation is straight thinking which always involves both skepticism and the sense of humor.

Meditation is a look within one's own mind in order that he may grow away from the confusion of the times, the superficialities of social life, the too limited biases of personal vision.

Meditation, however, is more than thought. It is the attempt to get a clear picture of one's own attitudes. It is both how do I really think about things and how do I feel about them. It always carries with it the critique of "how I ought to feel about things."

Meditation is looking at life objectively. It is seeing that such things as truth, goodness, love, understanding, forgiveness, courage, are the really important things and if these are ours, life is in correct focus.

"God damn" is as much a prayer as "God bless."

Both call upon an external deity to do something.

Prayer without skepticism and critical attitudes is self-hypnosis. The eventual result is not increase in faith but a dulling of the spirit. Such religiosity is an opiate. It prevents growth which requires obstacles and reorien-

tation of thought and feeling in directions that are often unpredictable.

Self-hypnosis is one of the degenerate forms of prayer because it does not help one permanently to deal with reality.

The use of endless repetitions is usual in self-hypnosis.

It is far better to think a thought through once and think it straight.

Prayer is the dream of an ideal world related to reality. It is the "soul's sincere desire." Since all men have desires, all men pray.

Formal prayer, whether read or spontaneous, is essentially an oration and as valuable or useless as other orations.

Prayer is quiet. It is not just absence of noise. This it may or may not be. It is stillness of soul, a deliberate and directed emotional calming.

Prayer is thought. It does not necessarily need spoken words. The latter are lower level prayers.

Prayer is action. It is a deed done that needed to be done and with no thought of any reward.

Prayer is inaction, just being.

Adult prayer springs from two main sources: a feeling of gratitude and the affirmation of life.

Prayer is as natural as breathing. There wells up in most, if not all men, occasionally, a gladness and gratitude for the common things of every day.

Prayer is a place where men go to get away from the feeling of hurry, bustle, confusion and try to see life in simpler, cleaner terms. A hill, a tree, a meadow, a brook, a mountain, the enjoyment of these enable men to regain emotional equilibrium.

Prayer ascends in maturity as follows: petition, gratitude and affirmation, being.

Worship, meditation, prayer should all be done naturally, spontaneously, without any thought whatsoever of success in business or anything else that might be achieved thereby.

We are still adolescents when we try to bargain with any external god. Prayers for business and social success fall into this category.

Prayer does not become adult until it ceases to be imitative, until one discovers the needs of his own emotional nature and shapes his prayers accordingly.

It is this meditation upon himself as a person and upon himself as related to the universe and to people that gives structure to prayer.

Through prayer one gets away from the separateness that isolates one from people and from the universe and to experience oneness with one's larger self which somehow includes other people and all the universe.

The experience of beauty and harmony is a prayer. At this point the aesthetic and the mystical experience are one.

Prayer is learning to live alone with yourself.

Prayer is learning to accept you.

Prayer is isolation for a moment or hours or weeks, not as an act of rejecting others but as an act of accepting you.

Prayer is the enjoyment of solitude.

Prayer is stillness complete. It is stillness of the blood, of the brain, of the nerves.

Prayer is a halt from the march, a halt of long or short duration, a rest from the rhythms that have caught you in order that you might be able to hear your own individual rhythm.

Prayer is an affirmation, not only that life is on the side of you but also that you are on the side of life.

For years I tried to pray because "the book" said I should. Nothing could have been so futile. Finally, after reading that "prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed," I gave up all previous practices. In their place I put solitude. In the place of devotional practices I put music. Solitude and music have given me more than any prayers ever written in any of the great devotional sources.

Perhaps it is a personal peculiarity. Yet I think there must be others just like me.

Prayer is the emotional process of integration, it often involves unspoken dedication.

Neither in worship, meditation, or prayer is a belief in God necessary, provided the worship be adult, the meditation intellectually honest, the prayer is gratitude, affirmation or just being.

“The seat of faith,” writes Dr. Carl G. Jung, in the 100th anniversary edition of the Atlantic Monthly, “is not conscious but spontaneous religious experience.” And further, “Any one who wants can at least draw near the source of such experiences, no matter whether he believes in God or not.”

Chapter 8

WHO IS AN ADULT?

One might define an adult in many ways. I shall limit myself to defining him in respect to his religious orientation.

An adult is one who gives no emotional importance to the questions of the ultimate origin of life nor to ideas of immortality. He recognizes that both of these are speculative questions.

An adult will be interested in anthropology, the long story of man in his struggle and development to the present day but he sees no purpose at all in relating life's origin to any extra-human force such as a supernatural being. Speculations about cosmic origin are too impractical for an adult. He knows that wherever and however man originated, the fact to which he himself must adjust is that he lives *now* and that he faces people and situations *now*. This is basic. It is unavoidable.

What is true of speculations about cosmic origins is equally true of speculations about immortality. The fact to which man must adjust is that he too will die.

I hold that dying is unimportant in itself. If a man learns how to live day by day he need have no fear of life's termination. It is the learning how to live that is important and that is often difficult.

An adult is one who knows how to use experts. This is a more important facet of adulthood today than in the past because life is so much more complicated. There are now a multitude of experts. Each may have his value and will have his limitations. This is as true of experts in religion as in anything else.

Positiveness is never any guarantee of any truth that any expert says he has. If he is a real expert in religion he will say what he has to say and never give a tinker's dam whether his hearer accepts it or not. In short, he believes too much in his truth to fall back on his own persuasive powers to prove it.

We, for our part, must decide whether his truth has any validity for us. If we cannot make such a decision we may very easily be used by the expert instead of using him, with the result that we will be living his life instead of our own. This, of course, is immaturity.

An adult is one who knows that any highly organized religion is a business. He recognizes that it is a legitimate business, turning out a desired service. He knows that some of the desire is stimulated as is natural in any business.

Sometimes the adult wonders why the religious business ought not to be taxed like any other. At other times, and considering the way other big businesses operate,

he wonders why it should not be subsidized as they are: oil and the depletion allowance, publishing and the second class mail rates, and many others.

The legitimacy of the religious business hinges on this: that great religions, and even lesser ones, are a construct against man's fears which are engendered by a mysterious universe.

An adult is one who accepts the universe as always to a considerable degree mysterious, a fact for which the adult is glad and of which he has learned that it is foolish to be afraid.

An adult is one who, in the periodic wars of reason versus unreason, always sides with reason.

An adult is one who knows that life demands continuous growth. "When I became a man I put away childish things" and, he will add, among them were childish ideas of religious reality.

For centuries there has been a quarrel between those who have had a first hand vision of reality and those whose vision was at best second hand. I choose to call this the quarrel between *ethos* and *mythos*. It has, I believe, been previously observed as the quarrel between prophet and priest.

Ethos denotes ethical insights. A penetrating mind sees through the cluttered and distorted values of his day to the realities of human relations and of man's relationship to things and to the earth.

In contrast to this, *mythos* refers to the cluster of

stories that surround personalities and events of significance. Man has justly been called a mythologizing animal. This mythologizing tendency is part of all art. It does not create reality but a feeling of reality. Often what it creates is very beautiful.

There is, however, a point in the development of any mythos where it obscures and distorts reality, becomes a substitute for reality. When this happens to a religious personality, the stories about him are made more important than what he had to say.

In short, whereas the ethos appeals to the minds of men, the mythos appeals to their emotions.

It requires a certain type of mind to create the mythos.

It requires an entirely different type of mind to produce an ethos.

Some of this difference may be seen by making a comparison of Jesus with the Apostle Paul. What is valid of Jesus' teaching may be found in the four Gospels. Of course much is put in his mouth that he never heard of. The ethical teachings of Jesus can, however, stand up under critical evaluation. He taught a way of living.

Paul, on the other hand, taught the worship of Jesus. He was the first Christian theologian.

There is little of the ethics of Jesus to be found in the letters of Paul. Thus does Paul relegate to secondary importance what Jesus had to say while he gives great importance to his (Paul's) interpretation of Jesus' life,

fitting it into a cosmic scheme in which Jesus is made the hero.

The divinity of Jesus might never have occurred without a Paul.

While, at first glance, the putting of someone on a pedestal and thus making a hero out of him may be intended as a compliment, it will at the second glance be seen as the quickest way to get rid of the ethical significance of the individual.

An honest evaluation of any man's life and thought involves criticism as well as praise. This is true whether the man under consideration be our next door neighbor or one who has lived thousands of years ago.

Those people today who emphasize the mythos are not dealing with the basic teachings of Jesus. They are dealing with a secondary or derived element. The "derived element" of any mythos may have some value but to thinking people, to those who are adult in their religious evaluations, it is not a basic nor necessarily even an important value.

Another related matter: an adult may accept the essence of meditation and worship and prayer without at the same time believing in the efficacy of any rituals, rites, dogmas, knowing that the latter are an outgrowth of the mythos.

Those who are adult in their religious thinking have noted that men almost never fight over the ethos of any religion but that they often fight over the mythos and

occasionally with great violence, as instance the St. Bartholomew massacre.

An adult knows that it is more important to learn from the great words of any religion than it is to believe in that religion. He knows that great words are to be looked through rather than to be looked at, that the words are not important in themselves, that it is the insight that is valuable.

For these reasons an adult will not readily be caught in a trap made of pious words.

Any adult philosophy of religion will take into account the four following facts.

1. Mankind is one, and is rapidly becoming more so. Parochial attitudes divide and destroy the human family whether these are political or religious parochialisms. Beyond parochialism lies the brotherhood of man. An adult pledges allegiance to the world and all the people in it, one human family, indivisible, with equal need of justice, liberty, fulfillment.

2. Love is the only enduring way of life. Love has in it elements that are physical, mental, emotional. These are not separable except for purposes of thought. Love also has in it elements of good will, humor, forgiveness.

3. Inasmuch as any adult philosophy of religion must grow, it must have in it, continually, room for the spontaneous, the fresh, the new. Otherwise it atrophies, it distorts and becomes a destructive and warping experience to man.

4. An adult has a moral, nay, a religious obligation to use his intelligence. Intelligence is man's greatest tool for ridding life of its fears and for liberating the endlessly soaring spirit of man. Intellectual integrity is imperative for those who seek to grow in their apprehension of and adjustment to reality.